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NDOM RHYMES A VECTENSIAN

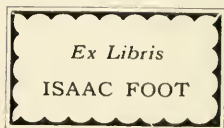
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RANDOM RHYMES
OF A VECTENSIAN :

CHARLES JOHN ARNELL.

Random Rhymes of a Vectensian :

CHARLES JOHN ARNELL.
///

ISLE OF WIGHT:
The County Press, Newport.
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DEDICATION.

ISLE of beauty, hail to thee !
Empress of the Southern sea ;
Solent queen ! thy crown of charms
Fortune lend protecting arms ;
Home of my nativity,
Isle of beauty, hail to thee !

Nursed upon thy tender breast,
By thy healthful airs caressed,
Childhood in thy happy vale,
Opening pages of life's tale,
Youth spent in thy pleasant places,
Memories these no time effaces.

Isle of my nativity,
Glad the thoughts that turn to thee
Of farm and field and happy hills,
Rivulets and little mills,
Of thy cliffs, and towns, and trees,
Shining shores and summer seas.

Bears thy mantle coat of arms,
Ruined scene of old alarms,
Where the grand old castle rears,
Glorious and grey with years,
Clothed with ivy and with moss,
Girdled by the grassy fosse.

Stands above the leafy steep,
Sentinel, the hoary keep,
Overlooks the vale below
Where the placid waters flow
Past gay garden, lawn, and bower,
Ancient church, and Norman tower.

Here the place where I was born,
Opened new eyes to the morn ;
Still the same endearéd spot,
Though friends have gone, and some are not :
Peals the well-remembered chime,
Sweet as in the olden time.

Hail, then, Vectis ! fair to see !
I would dedicate to thee
These odd fancies and poor rhymes
In fond memory of old times,
Old friends and familiar faces,
Pictures time nor toil effaces :
Empress of the Southern sea,
Isle of beauty, hail to thee !

PART I.

SONGS OF THE WIGHT.

LOST.

BELLMAN ! clang your bell, and cry
 Loud to every passer-by !
 Call in street and market-cross,
 Cry, and shout aloud my loss.

Bellman ! clang your bell, and call,
 " Listen ! " say, " good people all ; "
 Bid the townsfolk, good and kind,
 Help my dear lost maid to find.

Bellman ! clang your bell, and cry ;
 Call the people, low and high ;
 Tell them she is lost or strayed—
 She the beauteous child-maid.

Bellman ! clang your bell, and call,
 For reward I give my all—
 Give to any who shall find
 Fairy, meek-eyed Rosalind.

Bellman ! clang your bell, and say
 She was seen at break of day,
 Wending by the minster tower,
 Yester morn at dawning hour.

Who would harm so sweet a maid ?
Surely she is safely stayed :
Pray some goodman tidings bring
That may ease my sorrowing.

Bellman ! clang your bell, and sound
Hue and cry the country round ;
Horsemen, saddle ! footmen, roam !
Find the maid and bring her home.

THE FLYING MEN.

(With apologies to Mr. Kipling.)

GRAVED be the fame of the bold cheery aviators
Who ventured up and risked their bones, and
laboured for to fly;
When they spread their canvas wings,
Set their rudders, wires, and strings,
The engines stirred, propellers whirred, and they
rose and flew the sky.

Biplanes and monoplanes, Bleriot and Gautiers,
Forty-horse, sixty-horse, eighty-horse power;
And 'twas speed, speed, speed,
They did covet as their meed,
Sixty, seventy, a hundred miles an hour.

And this was the song of the gay and hearty flying
men,

To the rhythm of the Gnome, and the rushing of
the wind—

“O, our sweethearts and our wives!

“Never sorrow for our lives,

“Lest your wailing mar our planing in the outer
spheres we find.”

Alas ! for the luck of the brave daring aviators,
Who had smitten every cloud, and tortured all the
air,
By breach, or fog, or squall,
Death came to each and all,
When, at last, each was cast hurling downward
unaware.

Then spake the souls of the young and gallant
flying men—
“There was method in our madness, we declare ; ”
And they said—“ ’Twas hit or miss
“On the windy precipice ;
“Yet though we die, none can deny, we were mas-
ters of the air.”

THE GOLDEN DAY.

UNFOLD, O sad-sweet Memory,
The dim, distant past,
Fragrant of tender leaves of Spring ;
What time bright flowers were opening
Earth rose from slumber, and young Love awoke.

Let soft-toned music aid thee ;
Unroll the lore thou hast ;
Echoes of olden laughter,
From ancient tree and rafter,
Where Love's bright plumage shone e'er Time's
revoke.

Now is a later, new-born May,
Freighted with blossom and rose ;
The warm wind wafts gay carols, and hark !
New songs of throstle and linnet and lark,
And white sails gleam on the distant bay.

Clear from the hill trilled the shepherd's lay,
E'er the tardy sun uprose ;
And the tinkling bell and the bleat from the fold,
The story of spring-time all retold ;
But never returns that golden day.

Never was dawn so ruddy as then ;
Never was noon so fine ;
Nor ever so blithe did shepherd sing
Nor piped so sweet each feathered thing,
Nor dream gave back what once was mine.

LOOKING BACK.

LOOKING back along the years ;
Light and shadow, joy and tears ;
Memory paints old scenes anew,
When days were long and sighs were few.

Yon flows the river ; gleams the pool,
As silvery now, its wave as cool ;
But where the merryhearted noise
That rang there when we played as boys ?

Hear I yet the ancient jest,
But the laugh has lost its zest ;
For the faces of those friends
Are but a dream that fancy lends.

I hear that ever-haunting song,
Floating the misty woods among,
Music ineffable it plains,
But not *her* voice in those sweet strains.

Far chimes the peal of village bells !
An oft-repeated tale it tells ;
The glamour of that story still
Glows in the thoughts my memory fill.

MUSIC.

SPIRIT of love and beauty,

 Magic excellence,

All unspoken mystery

 Of those spheres from whence

All we breathe of joyance, all the finer sense !

What cloud-hidden mountain

 Knoweth the thing thou art ?

What o'erflowing fountain

 Filleth thy full heart ?

What super-sense could feel the whole of what we
feel in part ?

Flowers radiant and sweet

 That in secret grow,

Gathering colours at our feet,

 Though we know not how,

Tell of art, of thine but part; how much wiser thou !

Imagery of fair skies

 At sunset hour of June,

Gold and purple harmonies

 Veil the vestal moon ;

Fancy listeneth then for sound of thy immortal tune.

In a gloomy forest

 Solitary, dim ;

Syren-song thou singest,

Or barbaric hymn ;

Too deep for speech, strange things you teach the
wondering pilgrim.

O'er the trackless desert,
The fevered fugitive,
Sighing for the solace
Thou wert wont to give,
Fancies, from out a lonely star, a sweet recitative.

'Midst the savage wonders
Of a torrid zone,
In the awful thunders
Or the dread cyclone,
Doth arise, in strange disguise, thy deep diapason.

In those deathly regions
Of ice-fettered seas,
Dumb thy lyric legions,
Mute thy minstrelsies,
'Till from glorious Aurore thou pourest ecstacies.

Poet never taught,
Nor ever speech could tell,
All divinest thought
That from thy heart doth well,
Echoing over earth, and sea, and sky and heaven,
and hell.

All sublimest harmony
Of full orchestral sound,
All undreamt of melody
That in heaven were found,
Hearing, we should die of rapture too profound.

PRIMROSES.

LITTLE bright faces ! sweet April graces !

Lighting the hedgerows gay.

The diamond tears each fresh frond wears

No sorrows bring this glad day ;

Spring's heralds, ye, of hope that cheers

To meet the Argosy that nears.

And we, who waited the long winter through,

Who waited, and doubted, and sighed,

Know the love that had flown and left us lone

Cometh swiftly and undenied :

And we deem of the pearls that are your eyes,

Deep wells of faith, to make us wise.

A HOLY SOUL.

WHERE art thou, beloved ?
I cannot trace or know
The road of thy departure,
Nor whither thou did'st go.

In night's deepest dreaming,
In day's longest thought,
Through long vistas peering,
Vainly I have sought.

I walk the fields, I rove the woods,
In grief and loneliness,
So bright and fair when thou wert there,
Now all is emptiness.

The bees, the trees, the apple-bloom,
The fairy-fronded fern ;
With twinkling ripple, gleam, and gloom,
Windeth the bosky burn.

I listen to their whisperings,
But naught they tell of thee,
And once again the cuckoo sings,
Yet tidings none for me !

Only in that hallowed shrine
Where you had loved to pray,
There comes a signal and a sign
You are not far away.

A ROUNDELAY.

OH ! joy of May's awakening !
The sun, the blossoms, and the trees,
Whispers and kisses of the breeze,
And nature's lusty revelling.

Through the woods young Pan is piping,
Fair nymphs follow, fain to please ;
Oh ! joy of May's awakening
The sun, the blossoms, and the trees.

Care is banished, hastening
Hence, with age, o'er winter seas ;
Sweet content shall dwell at ease ;
Cheerly, now, we laugh and sing
The joy of May's awakening.

THE CHILD-MAIDEN.

WITH pen and open page, behold !
The poet pondered thoughtfully,
With many a fancy all untold,
And thus and thus said he :—

Oh ! words are scant, and worn, and cold,
I would a painter be,
Then I would paint the fair child-maid
With lovely tint, and line, and shade,
But though I woo the muse divine,
Alas ! no painter's art is mine.

To paint her as I see her now ;
That open, fair, expanding brow,
Those eyes that faithful vigil keep,
Like placid wells, pure, calm, and deep :
That dear, small, shapely head, and there,
Silk-amber tresses—wavy hair,
Those lips so sweet ; her childish face ;
That whole epitome of grace.

I see her pore, with gaze intent,
On some strange tale of wonderment ;
On her young breast a crimson rose
Sleeps, by a green leaf curtained close ;
Of store-house of her simple lore,
Her constant angel guards the door,
That naught may enter of offence
To her unclouded innocence.

The many-flowered and grassy glade
Morn, noon, and eve she often strayed :
Where mellow piping of the thrush
Singeth from out the hawthorn bush :
The tinted blossoms on the tree
Shine not so rosy-fair as she.

A MONOTONE.

THROUGH dreamy woods of Boscobel,
What time each sunset shadow fell,
Clear piped full-throated Philomel,
Singing of her he loved so well,
To listening, quivering Asphodel.

Hushed was thy noisy chime, O bell ;
To the far hills did echo swell,
Where folded fleecy sheep do dwell,
And shepherds sighed the tale to tell
Of the lost blue-eyed Christabel,
Erst the fair bride of Listowel.

A BUN.

ALL in a garden fair,
Sweeter never won
Breath of summer air,
Shine of golden sun,
Quick life doth sleep and wake, and creep and fly
and run.

Roses and all flowers
Blossom sweet and shine ;
Leaf or spray embowers,
And twisted eglantine,
All that beauty, fragrance, love, and witchery en-
twine :

Making youth of age,
Bringing back old dreams ;
Keeping heritage
Of promise in what seems
Outweighing the dry dust of days, in weal the spirit
deems :

Here, and evermore,
Joy eternal sings,
Filleth the heart's core
With hope of holy things,
So that every creature seemeth to have spirit wings:

And in a shaded bower
Sits on grandsire's knee,
Fairer than any flower,
Sweeter and dearer, she,
A little maid, blue-eyed, with hair like golden
tracery :

And what, ah ! what is this
That parts her rosy lips,
Rewarded with a kiss,
And seized with finger-tips,
That brings such smiles and childish wiles and un-
distempered bliss ?

Sweeter than the rose,
Joylier than the sun,
For which her rapture flows
Ere yet its taste's begun ;
A simple thing, yet rare and fine—behold, it is a
Bun !

YOUTH AND TIME.

SIDE by side two children fair,
She was the beauty, he the heir ;
They played by the banks of the silent pool,
Theirs was the hour, and Time the fool.

As youth and maiden fair to see,
Hand in hand by the trysting tree,
Their shadows fell on the silent pool ;
Theirs was the hour, and Time the fool.

They were wed, and over woodland and hill
Echoed the joyous bells, and still
Told the tale to the silent pool ;
Theirs was the hour, and Time the fool.

But Time he creepeth stealthily,
And he held the hour in his hand alway,
And winter came with the nearing Yule,—
Dark and deep was the silent pool.

At night by the side of the trysting tree
By glimmer of star came shadows three—
A man, a wife, and a little child,
Then vanished into the darkening wild.
And a curse brooded over the silent pool ;
Time had his revenge,—no longer fool.

SONG.

SING me thy sweetest song, love,
A song of Acadie,
Of all we yearn and long for, love,
In time that is to be.

Sing of that sunny land, love,
Afar from haunts of men,
Where radiant flowers beguile the hours
In every leafy glen.

The happy children smile and sing,
Bright birds their music trill ;
The fair blue sky, the mountains high,
The broad lake gleaming still.

Then sing thy sweetest song, love,
As hand in hand we fare ;
'Ere we draw hence thro' shadows dense,
To seek the sunlight there.

THE OLD CLOCK IN THE HALL.

IN the old ancestral hall, haughty, straight, and
tall,
With pictured knight and dame, stateliest of them
all,
Stands a figure motionless, with passionless face,
Gazing, calmly gazing, on gallantry and grace ;
On man and maid and child, forever through the
years ;
A lengthening procession, laughter love and tears.

Standing facing all in that fair and ancient hall,
Talking in a monotone, heeded not at all :
Till loud and unaware from station near the stair,
It calls to remind them, or bid them to beware ;
Pointing still as ever with fingers long and slender,
Some heed it, some heed it not ; Time ! profuse
lender !

PART II.



FLIGHTS OF THOUGHT.

LIFE IMMORTAL.

“ THERE is no death ! ”
We live and breathe,
Morn, noon, and eve ;
And then we sleep !
Grieve not, nor weep
That love should hide with parting breath.

“ Seas cannot drown ”
Love’s very own !
Fire cannot burn
Love’s lore we learn !
Love’s spirit nerves us,
And we are spirits, to decay impervious.

DREAMLAND.

ALL in the hush of stillest night
My tired body deeply slept,
And o'er the throb of weary brain
A sweet forgetfulness had crept ;
Yet was it spirit, was it brain,
That traversed all the world again ?

Strange scenes I cannot now recall,
Strange loves these eyes have ne'er beheld,
Dream-visions sweet that dimly fall,
Soul-memories of a vanished eld ;
Yet was it spirit, was it brain,
That traversed all the world again ?

What wings were those that bore me far
O'er mountain, forest, ocean wide ?
'Neath shine of moon and glittering star
I heard the lapping of the tide ;
Ah ; was it spirit, was it brain,
That hovered o'er the world again ?

Might it have been some dim refrain
Of vanished life, long laid to rest,
My soul still haunting it again,
And fluttering vainly in its quest ?
Ah ! was it spirit, was it brain,
That sped o'er fairest earth again ?

Was it a truth the sages old
Sang to the rosy-tinted morn,
That the departed sprites forlorn
Took shape, and new-lit suns beheld?
Ah! was it spirit, was it brain,
That traversed all the world again?

RESURGAM.

OH, golden morn ! oh, joyous day !
And I triumphant, confident ;
Yet ere to join the past ye went,
My pride in dust and ashes lay.

Oh, perfect moon ! oh, charmed eve !
Two wedded souls all steeped in bliss,
Foreseeing, fearing, naught of this—
A cloud wherein we scarce could breathe.

Oh, Life so fair ! oh, morn so glad !
Oh, day of promise, all fulfilled ;
Oh, icy blast that froze and killed,
Bereft of all we hoped and had :

Oh, treasure-freighted galleon, way'd,
Spreading white sails o'er summer seas,
To tempest changed the temperate breeze,
And flung thee shattered and dismayed.

Yet Life, thou livest undestroyed,
And Hope, thine handmaid, lights the gloom,
Faith lifts us, stricken, from the tomb ;
A greater Sun springs from the void.

THE RECOMPENSE.

IN Memory's cloisters dim I found
A theme of long ago ;
Delicately its folds unwound
In sunsets' after-glow.

Like petals of a fair white rose,
Bloomed out a shapely flower ;
Its fragrance breathed transfigured woes,
Soft dews its diamond dower.

Its voice a whisper from the skies,
An echo from afar,
Where youth's forgotten valley lies,
And youth's lost treasures are.

It touched those inner chords, long dumb,
My heart had sought in vain ;
Those memories that would not come
Broke in a low refrain :

It gave me vision new and strange,
Transcending things of sense ;
In worlds of glory angels range
I saw my recompense :

The recompense that waits for me
When I win through the night ;
Blinded and maimed of Destiny,
I shall receive my sight.

THE WEAVERS.

I DREAMT I woke before the light,
And through my window wide,
I saw the "Weavers of the Night"
As their strange craft they plied.

From north to south the woof was strung,
From east to west the weft;
Ceaseless the lightning shuttles flung
Skyward from right to left.

The Weavers they were angel-men,
A host like saintly birds;
Each face was veiled; came to my ken
The shuttles, they were words.

And then, anon, I asked of one,
"What weave ye in the sky?"
He turned, and then, in whispered tone,
To me thus made reply:

"These threads, the thousands that ye see,
"And thousands more beside,
"Are deeds of men on land and sea,
"Whose records must abide.

"And we, to mortals all unknown,
"Do swift each hap descry,

“And weave each act that men have sown
“Into this tapestry.”

Now I, the while, saw from beneath
The patterns, bad and good ;
For some were fair as a white wreath,
Some stained with tears and blood :

And some were pictures, blurred and sad,
Of tragedy and ruth ;
Of bleeding love, once fair and glad ;
And fraud and murdered truth :

And some were tangled skeins of wrath,
Of aims misunderstood ;
Faith toiling up a crooked path ;
Blank hopes and widowhood.

Such things were sad and ill to see,
And hard to understand
How such mischance and grief could be,
With Love on every hand.

So said I to the seraph-man ;
He answered with a smile,
And said : “Come, see the noble plan
“That works throughout the while.”

He laid his shuttle on the face
Of a fair passing cloud,
And took me high through upper space
Above each woven shroud.

All eagerly I looked, and lo !
A-shine in light I saw
Such pictures fair afloat in air
As filled my soul with awe !

With a glad awe, not trembling fear ;
The patterns now were plain ;
No place was here for sigh or tear,
For every loss was gain !

And every honest deed and brave,
Like jewels glowed alive ;
And trusting hopes, from deepest grave,
Smiled to the Crucified.

VANITY OF VANITIES.

THINK not rashly to ascend
Where the eternal cycles trend,
Beating 'gainst the vaults of time
Feeble wings, to seek the prime !
Thy ambition vainly burns,
That thou art, to dust returns !

Man, thro' all the flight of time,
Cannot fathom the sublime.
He is but the Potter's clay,
Where He set thee thou must stay.
Learn from beast and bird and flower,
Rest content, and live thine hour.

Life is full of mystery !
All thy lore is vanity !
Thy poor reason cannot solve
Wherefore all the spheres revolve ;
Living in a vision fair
That shall melt to less than air.

MAN'S DESTINY.

THE mighty sea hath laid full toll,
And many a luckless wight,
Where, o'er the vast wild waters roll,
Hath fallen on utter night ;
And yet a myriad men, this hour,
Defy the waves that did devour.

The fiery bolts of Jove, from skies
Of lurid clouds and angry storm,
Fell havoc wreak and dire surprise
On every shape of human form ;
Yet hill and valley, forest, plain,
The seed of Adam raise again.

The time-worn monuments of old,
Wrecked palaces and temples proud,
Shattered or levelled to the mould,
To Destiny in ruin bowed ;
Yet thick around all these there be
Ripe fruit of new maternity.

In earth's swift circle round the sun,
The far off planets, watching, see
The ebb and flow of joy and woe,
Life's struggle and intensity ;
Yet, over all, a seraph pure
Holds high the Sign that shall endure.

ODE TO MUSIC.

O, MUSIC, Goddess, full of grace,
 Enchantress, Queen, and Friend !
No son of earth hath seen thy face,
 Nor thy sweet mystery kenned.

Thy spell hath held us, all unbound,
 Or lulled our saddest fears ;
Faint, we thereby new heart have found,
 And smiled through happy tears.

Thy language tongue may never speak,
 Nor pen may write in words ;
Yet is it heard of those who seek
 To reach our over-lords.

Inscrutable, unseen, unknown !
 Only thy voice we hear ;
Interpreting each chord and tone
 By subtle charm of ear.

Love finds her sweetest thought in Thee,
 Of her thou seemest part !
She pulses through thy minstrelsy,
 Thou dwellest in her heart.

With anthem, psalm, and symphony,
 Thou 'lurest saints to earth,
And liftest souls to ecstasy,
 And bringest Faith to birth.

MANY WATERS.

“Many waters cannot quench Love,
Neither can the floods drown it!”

Song of Solomon.

O, HEAVEN-BORN Love; that fallest
In the wild waters' waste;
Not in vain thou callest,
For death thou canst not taste:

Out of the angry floods
Shall thy bright spirit rise;
Vainly the dark wave broods
To quench thy fadeless eyes.

LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES.

I PLANNED to build a tower tall,
And laid foundations deep and wide,
And slowly reared its granite wall,
Then capped it with a peristol—
A monument of form and pride.

A comely thing, and fair, it stood,
And shone in sun and moon ;
O'ertopped the giants of the wood ;
Content was I, but soon
Came tempest wild and wind of woe
And laid my stately tower low.

I built me, then, a lowly cot,
And clothed with ivy and with rose,
With round about a garden plot,
And then, for joy I would not lose,
A gentle mate for wife I chose.

Daily we wrought and lacked for naught,
At whiles we stayed at ease,
And kindly sun and rain, unsought,
Gave all we lacked to please ;
So thus we lived and loved, nor wept ;
Good angels us from rue had kept.

So all we found was fair and sweet,
So good it was to be !
Whilst all was peaceful, glad and meet,
And full content were we.
But, lo ! there came a boding sky,
Then rain and flood and tempest high !

Fierce raged the storm, the wind, the rain,
The flood surged round our cottage frail ;
Amazed we sought escape—in vain ;
Then prayed aloud 'twixt sigh and wail,
But never a pitying saint came nigh
To save us in our agony.

The fiery heralds of the day
Awoke me from a swoon ;
From floating drift whereon I lay
I saw the waning moon ;
And there lay she, pale, still, forlorn,
Dead ! and I left alone to mourn.

THE SAGE.

AN aged monk, in far Thibet,
Without the convent wall was set,
Remote from worldly strain and fret.

A goodly youth, with pensive brow,
Spake "Tell me, pray thee, father, how
I may find happiness below?"

"Ah! life is but a bitter pain,
With much to lose and little gain,
Thy strivings will be all in vain."

Quoth he, "Nay, father, I am strong,
The earth is fair, the day is long,
And all the air is sweet with song."

"So 'twas with me once," said the sage,
"But youth must pass and draw to age;
It is man's constant heritage.

"The flower that blooms so fair at morn,
The happy buds of hope new-born
At eve lay wasted and forlorn."

"Then, father, what and whence is life,
If evil dreams be all our strife;
What hope for man and child and wife?"

“ My son, life is a toilsome road,
Unto a far and fair abode,
Where sin nor sorrow may corrode.

“ It is a gate which open lies
To every creature 'neath the skies,
Upon the road to Paradise.

“ Whate'er befall thee on the way
Endure, enjoy as best ye may,
And grasp the fortunes of each day.

“ And it shall be that at the last,
When all thy wanderings are past,
Thine eyes shall open to the vast ;

“ Perceiving all the chart of time,
The spring and motive of the prime,
And joy shall merge in the sublime.”

ODE TO INVENTION.

O BLESSED genius of resource,
Replete of thought and deft of brain ;
Who leadeth on, and on again
To better, from discarded worse.

Who gave to man the lightning word,
The swift remove by land and sea ;
Yea ; winged flight 'neath Heaven's canopy ;
A thousand arts for its reward.

I fain would chaunt thy peerless praise,
For all that thou hast won and wrought ;
The crafts that thou hast shaped and taught
To meet the needs of growing days.

Yet for the humblest of our needs
To aid us thou dost condescend,
And to our trifling joys doth lend
The product of thy fertile seeds.

Still to the higher thou dost aspire,
Whilst changing cycles ebb and flow,
To reach high heaven from whence the leaven
Of all thou car'st to know.

THE PRIZE.

To the sad rhyme of changing time,
 Upon this earth we rove,
Fond man has sought and vainly fought
 To win by guile or love

A meed of bliss in that which is,
 But yet his clutch eludes ;
No sooner his than vanishes
 Into the shade that broods.

A glimpse, a gleam across the stream
 That ever widens out,
To be, to seem, a fateful dream
 To compass him about.

In life, in death, a pause ! a breath !
 Alas ! it is not won ;
A fading wreath the fates bequeath
 To e'en the bravest son.

Stay ! yet there stands, with clasped hands,
 And joyful eyes upraised,
One who had fought and fitly wrought
 Throughout a world amazed.

He bore no sword, nor uttered word,
But fixed his gaze on high ;
He crossed his breast, his sole behest
To live, tho' seem to die.

From out the gloom, pregnant of doom,
Broke swift, with seraph' song,
A shaft immense of light intense,
And angels bore him on.

From earth a sigh arose on high,
Like incense from a shrine,
Of hearts that love him raised above,
Now heralded divine.

THE MATERIALIST.

BIOLOGIST: whose warpéd mind
Makes wisest intuition blind,
Seeking no faith, how may you find?

To prove that clay is clay, you trust
In dull analysis of dust,
And bake for men the scantiest crust.

You find, in laboured blind equation,
A spurious proof of life's negation—
The soul a fond hallucination.

For thee sweet music hath no voice,
Melodious sound is only noise,
A mere nerve-soothing counterpoise.

For thee the Poet sings in vain
Of heights that thou cans't not attain;
His rhymes, to thee, a jingling chain.

No charm for thee hath fair Romance;
No reveries thine she may enhance,
Or colour common circumstance.

You trust to intellect in all,
Though knowing it is weak and small,
And fainter grows the spirit's call.

We shall not blame, if we are wise,
The sightless, that he hath no eyes,
The deaf, that he heeds not our cries.

A SONG OF LIFE.

HERE in calm and there in flood,
Now in tumult, now in peace ;
Flowing onwards without cease,
Life's river gathers ill or good.

Sailing on that tide of time,
Master of thine own frail bark,
Guide it that it prove an ark
Of progress sure, and trust sublime.

Let no fateful syren-call
To the hidden shoals beguile ;
Trust not vanity's false smile,
Nor let darkest cloud appal :
Faith and hope and kind endeavour
Win the bliss of the forever.

Heed no cynic's faithless sneer
Offering thee, for bread, a stone ;
Live not for this world alone,
Our haven shineth far from here.

Hope, a beacon fair to guide,
Fix aloft upon thy mast,
That may haply cheer at last
A struggling brother in the tide.

So shall many a waif and stray,
Spirit-broken in the strife,
Learn by thee the way of life ;
Taking heart in their dismay,
Seeing in the distant star
Angels beckoning from afar.

THE WORM.

THE Caterpillar, curious,
Deliberately crawls,
Examining, in scorn of us,
The patterns on the walls.

'Tis little doubt but that he thinks
We are benighted fools,
Fatheads, mugwumps, and "missing links,"
Jackasses, apes, and mules!

He feeds upon a juicy leaf,
And knows that very soon
He'll enter, after worm-life brief,
Into a snug cocoon—

A little coffin—there to lie
And sleep for many days,
And then emerge a butterfly,
To go his happy ways.

Perhaps he knows that we must plod
And hugger-mugger on,
Then lay each body 'neath the sod,
To free it's eidolon.

THE HERMAPHRODITES.

WHEN Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then a "woman-man?"
Satan managed to persuade
Eve to enter the down-grade;
Still, for all his evil pains,
She did not try to take the reins,
But, a loving help-meet, she
Soothed Adam's dire calamity;
Though failing of the Tree of Life,
Lived his good, obedient wife.

Now, her daughters, misbeguiled,
Plot vagaries strange and wild,
Storming that poor thing, the male,
His pre-eminence assail;
Threatening him, by fire and thunder,
On his knees, to knuckle under.

What would Mr. Lion say
If his mate tried the same way?
Or golden eagle, or he-mouse?
Master each in his own house:
Men! your birthright must prevail;
Man, remember, is the MALE.

POSTSCRIPTUM.

Think not this despiteful verse
Really was intended
To cast a graceless slur on hers,
Who ever man befriended ;

But what is best in womanhood
Is little learned from us ;
Much that is found in Adam good,
In Eve is odious.

UP TO DATE.

WE, you know, are up to date
In our practice and opinions,
Think for ourselves, and estimate
Life in "modern thought's" dominions.

Ancient philosophers and sages,
Prophet, martyr, priest,
So called "wisdom of the ages"
We value not the least.

Religion? yes, that's quite all right,
Quite all right in theory,
But, hang it all; what we don't like
Really, is authority.

The moral code? all right of course,
But when you come to practise it,
It's mighty inconvenient if
Our little games it doesn't fit.

The laws? yes, they must be obeyed
Just in the ordinary way,
Except, of course, when they are made
To our opinions contrary.

The King? of course, in loyalty,
We yield to none, but where's the fool
In these enlightened days would say
That any King should dare to rule?

The fact is we decline to be
Fettered or bound by anything;
What we hate is authority
Of God, or Government, or King.

PART III.



LOVE POEMS.

THE VOW.

WHEN the day and twilight met,
And the rose with dew was wet,
Brightly lumed the evening star
In the firmament afar :
Hushed the songsters in the wood ;
A beetle droned in pensive mood ;
Faintly moved the breeze, and soon
Rose the crescent of the moon :
Whilst I watched a little space,
Came a foot and smiled a face ;
She to me was sweet and dear,
Love was there and naught of fear ;
But I knew a danger hidden—
I had vowed a vow to heaven.

When the night and dawn had met,
Then our eyes with tears were wet ;
Faint and wan the evening star
Sank in unknown deeps afar ;
The sun from out a crimson bed
Golden shafts of brightness spread ;
Woke the songsters in the wood,
Sang and twittered as we stood ;
Mocked our sorry hearts to tell
All the sadness of farewell :
Hard the fate that drew me hence,
Forged in youth's blind vehemence ;
Broken hearts or broken vow—
All the choosing left me now.

THE UNDECIPHERABLE.

IT was a dream, a blissful trance ;
A wave from outer isles of chance ;
A soft wind breathed from regions fair ;
A sunbeam, warm and debonair ;
A glance, a look, a word, a smile ;
A tender bud that bloomed a while ;
An undistinguishable bond,
Such as might link twin spirits fond,
And subtly weave within the mind
A web of gossamer to bind.

Like some fair dove that fluttered out
From a far distant ark, in doubt ;
Seeking a resting place, whereon
To find its vague desiring won.

THE QUEST.

FUTILE is all scrutiny,
I cannot read thine eyes,
So clear and calm and mute are they;
Unutterably wise!

So far, so deep, those gleams that sleep—
Veiled lightnings of thy soul—
Secure those hidden counsels keep
From him who craves the whole.

What charm, what prayer, penance or pain
That still restraint may move?
Or prisoned passion's freedom gain
To meet requited love?

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.

MARITANA! Maritana! I am calling from afar,
Across the sunlit reaches where the wild sea-
maidens are;
Across the jewelled islets, and over gleaming sands,
Hear me call thee, Maritana! as I stretch my
empty hands.

Thy smile is on the river, and thy laughter in the
trees,
And thy shadow flitteth softly by my shallop in
the breeze;
Thy gentle shape at sunrise cometh clearly unto me,
Thro' the flowing veil of morning, from the sum-
mits to the sea.

In the perfume of the forest I can feel thy far
approach,
And I know the listless lilies bend and tremble at
thy touch;
And in the glinting sunbeams, thro' the branches,
slantingwise,
Are the sheen of golden tresses and the sparkle of
thine eyes.

Bright serpents list on lonely rocks, beneath the
waving palms,
The strange musique of wondrous birds that wake
the sultry calms,

Of this fair eerie paradise of lovely nameless flowers,
That weave a fairy trellis thro' the glades of fruited
bowers.

Maritana! Maritana! I am calling from afar,
And echo only answers yet beneath the tranquil
star;
But I know thine ear is quick to catch my message,
winging free,
And, lo! I build a sylvan home to shelter thee
and me.

THE DAY AFTER.

AWAKE ! my love awake !
For the mavis calls to his mate
Over the sleeping lake,
Singing—" Come, it is late, it is late ! "
For the dawn is gilding the crest of the hill,
And the dying moon faintly smiles farewell.

Awake ! for the day is nigh,
The first of our wedded joy ;
It comes with the sun in a ruby sky,
Let us hail its bright envoy,
For the sweet night goes, and the opening rose
Waits for my lady dear to choose.

For thee, my love, for thee
The rippling fountain plays,
For thee the melody
That breaks from leafy ways ;
And all the waking wood
With music overflows ;
Each daisy where we stood
Thy hastening footstep knows.

I hear thy lightsome song
The tuneful thrush eclipse ;
Whereto its themes belong
I learn now from thy lips.

Thy heart, thy heart, is mine,
And mine throbs in thy breast,
Wrapt in a love divine,
We keep a single quest.

Together let us roam
The purple spangled heath ;
Athwart sky's sapphire dome
Clouds weave a fleecy wreath ;
A wide, uncharted sea
That knows nor wave nor foam,
Like Love's hushed longings be
In happy calm of home.

PERSEPHONE.

O MAIDEN rare whose tresses fair
Frame that sweet face of thine ;
No diadem holds such a gem
As sparkles in thine eyne.

No pearl could seem with chastened gleam
Like ivory of thy brow ;
Nor facet fine could e'er outshine
That tear that glistens now.

If I could fly or far or high,
And search through all my days ;
I ne'er could find such spell to bind
My soul with glad amaze.

A CHRISTMAS CARD.

THIS little card makes no pretence
Of beauty, cost, or excellence ;
Its meaning is what I desire
Of good for you, sincere, entire ;
What more it tells you may divine,
What I would speak—not here define—
Could I but bridge dividing space,
And meet and greet you, face to face ;
With you I leave it, since no other
Can guide my fretted bark to harbour.

SONG—TO CAROLINE.

OUT of the star-shine,
Under the moon,
Cometh she soon,
Fair Caroline.

Purest and loveliest,
Graciously sweet,
All that is meet,
She I love best.

Touch her not, Time !
Vex her not, Care !
Maiden so rare,
Theme of my rhyme.

Shall I not sue for her,
Weep not, nor rue for her ?
All my soul lives for her,
Labours and gives for her.

Evermore hallowed,
Cherished, this pearl of mine,
E'en till the end of time,
Spirit to spirit wed.

Out of the star-shine,
Under the moon,
Cometh she soon,
Fair Caroline ?

SHADOWS.

OVER the bright sands gleaming,
We watched the moonbeams streaming,
And the ocean itself seemed dreaming,
Fair Corisande.

Alone in the drear December,
Watching the dying ember,
Wearily I remember,
Lost Corisande.

Comes blithe and bonny May,
The shadows have passed away,
And we wander together for aye,
Sweet Corisande.

THE RETURN.

SING, Lilith, sing to me that old moon-song ;
Sing, and let us dream again the world is sweet,
Dream the nightingale is fluting loud and long,
And the millstream flowing at our feet.

Sing, dear, sing ; let us remember and forget,
Live again those glad, too happy, days ;
The golden sun we thought would never set ;
Forget the sorrow, the pain, the tortuous maze.

Sing, Lilith, sing again the old moon-song ;
Let us forget shipwreck and angry sea ;
Forget we ever suffered bitter wrong ;
Dig from dead ashes of the past a remedy.

A SUMMER IDYLL.

SAILING, sailing,
Zephyrs trailing,
Seagulls wailing;
Sunbeams hailing
Love's unveiling:
Hope prevailing,
Though bewailing,
Doubting, quailing,
Love's travailing.

Blue expanses
Souls entrance;
True romances
Love enhance,
Win, perchance,
Tender glances,
Significancies,
Soft dalliance;
Cupid's lance
Shot askance.

RIVER SONG.

MUSIDORA ! To the river !
For the sun is westering,
And the reeds and sedges quiver
In the breezy evening flow :
The boat ! the boat is waiting
My true love for a-freighting,
And the summer sky belating the twilight ere we go.

Musidora ! To the river !
I shall row and you will steer,
And it needs but you should smile
And whisper me the while,
For that you are my darling and my dear.

Musidora ! Ah ! the river !
See how placidly it flows !
Will it tell you all the secrets
In its bosom's depths it knows ?
For our life is like a river, to a golden sea it goes.

DARK DAYS.

FALLING, falling,
The leaves are falling.
The trees are weeping
In autumn rain ;
And my true love cometh
Not, not again.

Falling, falling,
My hopes are falling ;
Once ruby bright
In the summer that's dead,
In the soft light of love,
Now dark as night.

Falling, falling,
Silence is falling
O'er the upland slope,
On wood and field ;
And I dream and listen,
'Till fate shall yield.

Calling, calling,
A voice is calling :
Can it be he—my beloved ?
Out of despair and out of the rain
My true love surely cometh again,
Joyfully, as it behoved.

BIRDS IN DECEMBER.

(After Tennyson's " Birds in May.")

O, SORROW ye birds to-day
As ye never have sorrowed before !
Be sorry, ye larks, on earth, on the dreary clay,
Sorry for ever and ever for joy is no more !

Look ! look ! on the snow where lits
The sad-eyed robin, shut out from the grass ;
Look ! look ! they are gone, the poor little tits ;
Dead ! dead ! like the golden May that was.

O, sorrow my heart, and weep,
For the swallow has gone, and thy hope and only
 desire ;
O, sorrow my heart, you have broken the gossamer
 wings of love ;
Fallen, like perished leaves, to be trod in the mire.

PART IV.

TRANSLATIONS.

REMEMBRANCE.

(From the French of Gabriel Volland).

WHEN the night has overtaken me, final, dark,
I shall leave on earth an inglorious memory ;
And some will say :—“ This man was proud, morose ;”
But thou who comest to me on that morn, my last,
E’er I be borne to oblivion and the tomb,
I see thee stand, sad, trembling, at the door,
Weeping, perhaps and well remembering
How passionate was the clinging of my embrace ;
Musing of my eyes, blue as the skies of France,
Though dimmed with sorrow and long pain,
And paled, perhaps, their blue, and dulled their gleam,
Then thou wilt remember, but too late !

I see thee come that day, laden with flowers,
To print a farewell kiss on my closed eyes,
Reverently pressing the bloom of thy dear lips ;
But then my heart no longer feels its grief ;
The sun that through the open window shines
My still hand warms not with its ray ;
What voice can now disturb my dreamless sleep—
Dead to thy beauty now as to the sun’s ?

THE WORKMAN.

(From the German of Richard Dehmel.)

WE have a bed, we have a child,
Wife mine !
And we have work for both, ah ! much,
The sun, the rain and breezes mild ;
There wants but little to be such
As are the birds, free, unbeguiled ;
It wants but time !

When we, a-Sundays, roam the fields,
Child mine !
And o'er the Ahren, broad and long,
Watch the blue swallows flash and throng ;
Oh ! then there lacks not vesture fine
To match the birds in beauty-shine ;
It wants but time !

But time ! we beat the welkin wild,
Such frail folk we !
A brief space of Eternity !
Indeed, lacks naught, O wife, O child,
In all the bounty that we gain,
Bird-like to mock or fear or pain,
It wants but time !

THE MAD WOMAN.

(From the French.)

A WOMAN—insane—with long tresses fair,
That silver with shine of the moon :
The idiot girl, with long flaxen hair
That, falling, would reach to her feet, and to spare,
Recks not of her sorrow, nor late, nor soon.

She with the emerald eyes, in their sheen
One can fathom her strange soul's deep ;
She with the large eyes bright and green,
In these may her wayward dreams be seen ;
Clasped hands, like Angel's, still as sleep.

And, in the sweep of her sable robe,
Slender and pale, yet lovely,
Seating herself at the open door,
Whilst evening sky makes soft glamour
With flowers strange garlands are wove by.

And yet, yet is she far happier than we,
Breathing the brief moment's glory,
And bending low her grave, sweet brow,
With folded hands, her knee below,
She reads an invisible page of story.

DESPAIR.

(From the French of Jean Richepin.)

I.

WHERE shall I live? In what recess
To choke my utter weariness?
Darker my sorrow in its blight
Than darkest night!

Where shall I die? Beneath what wave
Find for my cruel grief a grave?
My pain is deeper far to me
Than the unfathomed sea!

Oh! whither flee? By what wild course,
To stifle all my sad remorse?
My anguish, drawn with every breath,
Stronger than death!

II.

A senseless corpse! No life it warms
When I would take it in my arms!
“My poor love is no more,” I said,
“She is dead!”

Though far, so far away it be,
What ocean current carries me
Must carry, too, relentlessly,
The dead.

Far! It must bear me to the abyss;
No matter! What I crave is this,
To bury, in the darkness dread,
My dead.

HOW I WATCHED THE PLAY.

(From the French of Helene Vacaresco.)

I WATCHED the children playing, playing under the
trees,
Merrily waved their arms and floated their hair in
the breeze ;
Noontide gilded the marble, and lit the shady wood ;
The place was warm and joyous, like a thing of
flesh and blood.

There had been a riot of play, there had been peals
of laughter,
The scented summer airs every movement followed
after,
And I cried within me, watching, and thus to myself
did say :
“ O, love, it shall fall that these will all be wounded
by thee some day.

“ A day when these whose footsteps, like the
fountain’s falling spray,
“ Hurry faster than the ripples of the waters by
the way,
“ Will be held by the enchantment of the breath of
the unknown,
“ All mute, transfixed and still, like effigies of
stone.

“ A day when these, so happy now, waving roses in
this hour,

“ Shaking every bough, and caressing every flower,

“ Shall be left all stiff and bleeding, with their wan
hands crossed,

“ To guard the bitter silence of the hearts that they
have lost.

“ They'll have lost the lust of life, the zest and the
desire

“ To wrest from the glad hours their fever and
their fire ;

“ A day will come when they—mad creatures all,
I wis,

“ Will pine, all self-consumed, in the craving for a
kiss.

“ They'll have scorched the passionate hope, which
every touch torments,

“ In the stifling, haggard silence where in each soul
laments ;

“ These, for whose bright revellings, the lawn is all
too small,

“ Then in the grip of a single glance will sure be
held in thrall.

“ They'll wander o' nights and mutter alone, and
ever a' dream they'll be ;

“ Love, you have caught them every one, alack !
and alas ! I see ;

“ With sad clenched hands they will strike the
brow,

“ For their care will be only for far things now.

“ You'll have sunk and vanished beneath them,
insanity sweet and fair :

“ You'll have held all their blood, like Death, that
day of their despair ;

“ You'll have led them into the flames of a fiery
burning sea,

“ Where the whole universe thrills, exults, and
writhes in agony.

“ You came in the tender glory of dawn, with the
lingering odours of night,

“ And you tripped alongside their youthful steps
with fairy footfalls light ;

“ But, ah ! dear God ; for that wonder, so rapturous
and divine,

“ What can you give them, Love, but yourself for
whom they pine.”

THE LOST SONG.

(From the French.)

IT is the warm sweet night where breathes
All the mystery of Spring ;
In the whispers of the trees,
Scent of mint is lingering.

Ah ! that song, my soul's torment
Long since, ah ! so long ;
Again I hear that haunting song
Whilst the gathering shades lament.

Cruel, ah ! so cruel song ;
Lingering and far along,
Melting into night.

Lamenting and resigned
Never may I find
That song nor trace its flight.

My soul is like a garden fair
Wherein a bubbling fountain plays,
Breathes a song of many lays,
Sparkling in the air.

Come and lend to its clear stream
The reflex of thy deep, deep eyes ;
And see thy pallid image rise
Bathed in its fair water's gleam.

Carillons the zephyrs move,
Pealing to the heavens above,
Of the bluest that you love.

Away to undiscovered shore !
My soul is like a garden fair
Whereof is partly closed the door.

POETIC ART.

(From the French.)

O MUSIC ! foremost everywhere,
Scorning bonds of form and line ;
Subtle graces, such are thine,
Floating, fainting in the air.

Thy language common speech disdains
Only this, thy full heart's song
Hear we still, triumphant, strong,
Blending the undefined in rhythmic strains.

Thus glow the lovely veiled eyes ;
Thus shimmers the bright day at noon ;
Thus the blue heaven with stars and moon
Spreads in the mellow Autumn skies.

No garish colour, nor full pride of morn
We long for, but the shades undreaded,
Shadow unto shadow wedded,
As dream to dream or flute to horn.

Spurn, spurn to the deeps of death
The cruel spirit, the ribald leer,
Which bring to angel eyes a tear,
And banish slander's evil breath.

Seize then and strangle eloquence,
To yield some genius of the muse;
No remorse shall thee accuse;
It was but a vain pretence.

The wrongs of the muse! ah who shall tell?
What idiot child or negro loon
Forged for us that trumpery rune,
Hollow and false as a broken bell?

Sweet music, ever again arise,
Pealing thy lyric melody
Far, like a passing soul doth flee
To other loves and other skies.

Waft, waft, thy song on joyous quest,
Launched on the freshening breeze of morn,
With scent of mint and thyme, new-born,
And poetry is all the rest.

REQUIEM.

(From the German of Ferdinand Von Saar.)

'TIS All Souls' Day,
Damp, cold, and gray,
Mist clothes the ground,
In the churchyard still,
Whence slopes the hill,
The grave-lights glimmer,
Crowning each mound.

Yes! to-day remembers
Each one his dead,
Where rest their embers
Decks he the head
Of the grave where they moulder
Memories of human kind
Columns of iron and marble bind
With chaplets of fame.

But who gives thought
To the nameless? Or aught
To the tombless, unloved?
Far from the pulsing world to-day
Unmissed, unwept,
Their ashes back to the Universe swept.

To them to-day
Gives one a thought,
Who, like them, has lived
And struggled and fought,
Has suffered,
And often trembling, in their destiny
Sees, for himself, Fate's sad decree.

WORDS.

(From the French of Henry Spies.)

How shall I write it, this poem to-day
Aflame with the thoughts I burn to say ?
Subtle, shaded, and mobile,
Like a river where gleaming shadows steal,
How picture with tuneful words that sing
Clearly the joy my heart o'erflows ;
The romance, all the throbs and throes
And glamour of new-born Spring ?

There are the words, but not the theme :
Poor words ! they cannot paint my dream,
For they have neither colour nor scent,
Nor all the bright sky's wonderment.

Ah ! poor little words, so soiled and worn,
Bandied, abused, and tortured and torn,
From mouth to mouth, on pages loaded,
Poor sad little words ! like coins corroded.

Some poets make rose and morose rhyme, too !
Amour with azure, and blue with adieu ;
They have spoilt the words for us, when we would
fain
Sing of the sun and the breeze and the rain,
We are numbed, for there are the words, but the
thought
Not in these, for they speak not the things we
sought.

THE SEA.

(From the French of Théodore Botrel.)

THE LAMENT OF THE FISHER'S WIFE.

To cheer the night that shadowed me,
I had brave little flowers three,
Dearer than all the world to me.

Kind and good to their mother they,
But the treacherous, sullen sea one day
At one stroke swept all three away.

It stole my flowers in cruel wise
Who came to me to close their eyes;
I smoothed their hair: and yet—ah me!
Despite myself, I love the sea.

[illegible]

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